IV

THE ᶜAWDHILLAH CONFEDERATION WITH SOME REFERENCE TO AL-HAMDĀNĪ

My interest in the ᶜAwdhalī tribes dates from 1940 when I first went to Aden, sent by London University to study south Arabian dialect, but in the emergency following the fall of France I joined the Aden Protectorate Government Guards and it was in December that year that I obtained permission to accompany the political officer to Zārah, the ᶜAwdhalī Sultan's village. The political officer had come to settle a dispute between the Sultanic house and the tribes of al-Ḥaḍn. In the course of discussions the Sultan produced a most interesting document called the '**sharᶜ**' of the ᶜAwdhillah, a translation of which I published in the **Admiralty Handbook of Arabia** in 1946 but I have since studied it and its curious language in far greater depth. I have re-visited the Sultanate on several occasions since, notably in 1954 and consulted Sultan Ṣāliḥ on various aspects of customary law, most recently in Jeddah, but one enquiry has led to another and I have never found enough time to publish my research on the ᶜAwdhalīs from which this present paper is drawn.

That the ᶜAwdhillah are an ancient confederation that, at my first visit, had changed little over a thousand years or more was at once evident. It cannot be mere coincidence that a pre-Islamic inscription mentions ᵒŪd/ᶜAwd and Dathīnah close together in the same context. Landberg has suggested that after Islam the Awd tribe called itself Awd Allāh, later becoming Awdh Allāh — this would be analogous to the either Quraysh Allāh, indicating that the tribe owed allegiance to a particular god, and in fact probably constituted a tribal theocracy. He thinks that a change in name would indicate a

change of politico-religious allegiance. I see however no particular reason why they should not have been so called before Islam.

The **Tāj al-ᶜArūs** has a long passage on the ᶜĀʾidh or ᶜAyyidh Allah (with ᶜ**ayn**) who are probably to be connected with the ᶜAwdhillah —whom incidentally I have also heard called ᶜAyādhillah. Al-Zabīdī links them with Saᶜd al-ᶜAshīrah b. Madhḥij, a genealogy which is given in fact by Ibn al-Kalbī. Some writers trace back the poet Afwah al-Awdī to Saᶜd al-ᶜAshīrah and al-Hamdānī says he came from Wādī Naᶜwah near the modern town al-Bayḍā. **Al-Aghānī** calls Afwah one of the great poets of the ancients (**al-qudamā**ᵒ) of the Jāhiliyyah, a leader in their wars, one of their judges (**hukamā**ᵒ) whose judgement (**kalām**) was highly valued. In the published **Dīwān** of Afwah I have found nothing to confirm that he came from the tribe we know today as the ᶜAwdhillah, though he was of Madhḥij to which the ᶜAwdhillah seem to belong.

It appears that the Awd tribes extended rather further north than the present day habitat of the ᶜAwdhillah, into Sarw Madhḥij, to judge by what al-Hamdānī says, but he singles out for mention the Dahbalī, the Ashrāf of the Banū Awd and their Lords (Sādah) and this house still flourishes today — incontrovertibly the Awd are the forebears of the ᶜAwdhillah. The mediaeval **Ṭurfat al-Aṣḥāb** confirms that the Awd are of Madhḥij, as also are the Juᶜfīs, the Banū Dayyān and the Nakhaᶜ. The Dayyān and Nakhaᶜ at the present time are **ḥabīṭs** of the ᶜAwdhalīs. The **Ṭurfah** also makes Madhḥij a descendant of ᶜAryab — which today is the name of an ᶜAwdhalī village of al-Ẓāhir.

Sultan Ṣāliḥ al-ᶜAwdhalī made the significant statement to me that all the tribes except al-Manṣūrī are Ahl ᶜAwdhillah and the name ᶜAwdhillah is only applied to the tribes who follow the Dahbalī. Landberg commented in 1897 that the Dahbalīs were vastly more powerful than the Sultans of Zārah themselves. The well known journalist, the late Muḥammad ᶜAlī Luqmān, who visited the ᶜAwdhalīs in 1946, reported that the Sultanic family is descended from the famous Sultan ᶜĀmir b. ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb the Ṭāhirid who

reached Dathīnah in 908/1502-03 and he printed a genealogy supplied to him there. I think we should need more precise evidence to confirm this and I have at least not heard of it from Sultan Ṣāliḥ.

My present working theory is that the Dahbalī of al-Hamdānī were the original Lords of the Awd/ᶜAwdhillah in the early Islamic centuries, whether as purely secular arbiters and repositories of customary law, or whether they had also some theocratic type of function — but of this last I find no evidence. The present Sultanic house is more recent. They may have been the leaders and arbiters of the Manṣūrī group which may have entered and settled in the territory at some date unknown, but of course after the time of al-Hamdānī. In the historical material available to me, in print or Ms. form, I have found virtually nothing about the ᶜAwdhillah, but one hopes that documents may turn up containing some data upon them.

A Geographical sketch of ᶜAwdhalī territory

ᶜAwdhalī country lies east and north of Aden, its chief market centre being Lawdar, some hundred miles distant from it as the crow flies — or should one say the **qaṭā**, sand-grouse? Its borders were defined by an Aden paper as the territory of the ᶜUlahiyyīn on the east, Yāfiᶜ and the Yemen on the west, on the south the Dathīnah borders, and the Yemeni border on the north. During the later years of the British Protectorate the ᶜAwdhalī borders were defined (in order to avoid disputes I suppose) by the action of the British Agent and demarcated by pillars.

A glance at the map shows that ᶜAwdhalī territory is split into two parts by the great mountain range, the Kawr, the crest of which is called al-Ṭaffah — Sultan Ṣāliḥ called it Rās am-Ṣabar. The district of al-Ṭaffah includes Dhirwah, Bilās and Arḍ al-Sulṭān. The highland plateau to the north beyond al-Ṭaffah is known as al-Ẓāhir. The slope of this range to the south with the plain below it is known al-Kawr or Kawr al-ᶜAwdhillah. Al-Bāṭin is the flat ground south of the range, a part of which is known as al-Ḥaḍn.

Leading north-east is the Wādī Ruqub to which al-Hamdānī refers, flanked on the north by the Kawr and on the south by a high mountain range which I suppose even now is not well known. Ruqub is an important route to the east but I recall that it was not very secure.

The seat of the Sultanate is at Zārah, one of the low but steep defensible hills, projecting from the plain at the south of ᶜAwdhalī territory. Opposite it lies Shirwān hill, the top of which still has the ruins of a **ḥuṣn**, and where Sultan Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥusayn built a new castle. In the plain to the east lies Lawdar market, occupying a central position where tracks cross from Dathīnah, Ruqub, via the traditional religious centre of am-Nijdah, the Aden-Shuqrah route, and the various passes up the Kawr, including the most important, the Wādī Thirah. Wādī Thirah runs from west of Zārah and Lawdar and passes through Lawdar itself. The top of the Thirah pass has pre-Islamic paving and there are traces of a paved causeway all the way down to the Dathīnah plain but the causeway itself has long been badly eroded. Customary law forbids fighting on the Thirah pass. During the latter years of the British Protectorate a new motor road was built up near the Thirah pass, but when I climbed it in late 1940 we could only go on foot though some people rode camels or donkeys. The land below Zārah is called am-Māzim.

The Bāṭin became a rich agricultural district as a result of the establishment of security in the early 1940s and cultivation was greatly extended so that it became able to supply the Aden market with fruit and vegetables. Here the houses are mostly of inferior architectural quality to those of al-Ẓāhir and there are fewer traces of the ancient pre-Islamic culture. Between my first, second and third visits in 1940, 1954 and 1964 there were great signs of prosperity because of the remittances sent from Aden and sale there of local produce.

The Ṭaffah-Kawr range which by its wildness and imposing, almost perpendicular heights, has captured the imagination of the people in their song and verse, is about 7,000 feet high, some 3,000

— 4,000 feet higher than al-Bāṭin. Al-Ẓāhir plateau behind it contains a number of small towns such as ᶜAryab, in stone architecture. These have ancient paved threshing floors and terracing, and the great but now entirely ruined city of am-ᶜĀdiyah which has cisterns, temples, walls and numerous inscriptions, the last hardly touched at my first visit. The climate of al-Ẓāhir is mild, and can be sharply cold; I noticed some perennial streams.

Al-Ṭayyib ... Bā Makhramah says of it, 'Al-Ẓāhirī is the **nisbah** to al-Ẓāhir ... a tract in the Yemen above Dathīnah from which wheat (**ḥinṭah**) etcetera, is imported to Aden and elsewhere'. Even in mediaeval times, then, it supplied Aden with comestibles and it was at the village of Mukayrās that the Aden Government set up its centre of agricultural experiment before World War II.

On the Yemenite side of the border from Mukayrās the important Yemeni market of al-Bayḍā has always had close connections with the ᶜAwdhalī tribes.

A further point of interest is the stone circle of pre-historic times which the local people call the bride and bridegroom with their retainers, near al-Ṣawmaᶜah.

While in Zārah in 1954 I attempted to identify the place-names in this territory with those cited in al-Hamdānī a copy of whose **Ṣifah,** edited last century by D.H. Müller, I had with me, and I was able on the basis of this work to make corrections to the map which the late Professor Hermann von Wissmann was compiling about that time. There are of course some errors in the D.H. Müller edition and Muḥammad al-Akwaᶜ has been able to correct some of these in his edition from informants though I would question some of his notes. Al-Hamdānī states that certain places belonged to the Awd who would obviously seem to be the ancestors of the ᶜAwdhillah and others to the Aṣābiḥ whom one is tempted to link with the Ṣubbayḥah west of Aden or the Ṣabāḥīs on the southern frontier of the YAR. Apparently however there are still Asābiḥ (with **sīn**) in al-Ẓāhir province according to Sultan Ṣāliḥ, and there is a Saint,

Waliyy, ᶜUmar b. Miṣbaḥī in al-Ẓāhir province. Al-Hamdānī also speaks of the Dahbalīs (who have survived to the present day) and of whom more will be said below. The von Wissmann sheets of the Aden Protectorate maps appeared in 1957, the placenames corrected by me as far as possible but it would require direct travel over the whole area as Dr Wilson did in the Ṣanᶜā' region to compare al-Hamdānī with what still is known of the toponomy of his day.

The tribes of the ᶜAwdhalī Confederation

Rarely or never do two lists of the tribes of any given confederation agree, yet the lists themselves may not be inaccurate necessarily. Most travellers, for instance, rely on a small number of informants who may be well acquainted with certain tribal groups, but know little of others. Some informants may omit smaller units or consider them part of an other larger group. Where lists of tribes compiled at considerable intervals of time are concerned, the virtual disappearance of certain **groups** and the rise of others can be the cause of the disparity when comparisons are made.

The first grouping which I give below, made in 1947, seems to be territorial rather than tribal: it has been supplemented with notes from other informants and sources.

Ahl al-Ẓāhir :Manṣūrī, Barkānī, Mukayrasī, Martaᶜī, Shihrī

Al-Ḥaḍn :Manṣūrī, Bijayrī, Ṭuhayfī, Qafaᶜī all live in al-Ḥaḍn and are known as the ᶜAwdhillah al-Kawr according to Landberg. His statement that the Bijayr al-Ḥaḍn and the Bijayr al-Raydah are the same tribe was confirmed to me. The Laqfāᶜ and Manṣūrīs have a common ancestor.

Ahl am-Shaᶜah :This tribe was formerly at war with the Sultan but is now (1947) under his rule. The sub-tribes of the group are ᶜUmayrī, Qufayshī, Dayrī, Dhiyaybī and ᶜUbahī, and they inhabit the Wādī Ruqub. The **bayt al-maᶜqalah** in which the headship lies, is Ahl al-Ghānim.

Ahl Damān : A people of the mountains (actually the eastern side of al-Ẓāhir) who refuse to obey the Sultan who can only enter their territory if invited. **Nahḍah** reported on May 18th, 1950, that the Damānī tribe had submitted to **al-aḥkām al-shar^{c}iyyah** and entered into obedience to the Sultan, a truce (**Ṣulḥ**) being concluded between them and the Dhiyaybī so that their differences could be explored. **Nahḍah** names al-Warkā as the residence of the ^{c}**āqil** of Damān. It seems that their country extends as far as Wādi 'l-Khaṭīb of the Upper ^{c}Awlaqīs.

A Damānī informant named to me the Damānī subtribes as: al-Qafa^{c}ī (Laqfā^{c}), al-Ḍamajī (also spelled as al-Ẓamajī), Siyyārī, Maḥrizī, ^{c}Annānī, Shamrūkhī, Ḥaddād, Ahl Dāwūd (among whom the Ahl ^{c}Alī ^{c}Umar are the **ahl am-ma^{c}qalah** or headman's house, with their present ^{c}**āqil** (1954) ^{c}Umar Sālim). the Bihiyyī, the Ma^{c}waḍī (Āl Ma^{c}waḍiyyah), and the Ahl ^{c}Alī b. Shaykh, from which latter personage springs the ancestor of this group. The ^{c}askar am-Damānī were also vaguely mentioned to me, perhaps in the same social category as the soldiers of the ^{c}Awdhalī Sultan. Landberg avers the tribe has thirteen sub-divisions.

Sayyid Muhammad ^{c}Umar al-Jifrī who should be in a good position to know, gives the following list of tribes which seems in no way to clash with the territorial list **supra.**

Al-Manṣūrī : The tribes al-Barkānī, al-Shihrī, al-Ṭuhayfī, and a section of al-Bijayrī come under (**tābi^{c}ah**) the Manṣūrī and are included under the name Manṣūrī. It may well be, however, that as an ^{c}Awdhalī state official, al-Jifrī shows a certain bias in calling these tribes Manṣūrīs. According to Sultan Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥusayn, the five tribes (**qabā^{c}il**) of al-Ẓāhir are Man-

ṣūrīs and, in fact, the land is really Arḍ al-Manṣūrī. The other tribes such as the Bijayrīs, are said to have come in from elsewhere as individuals to defend the land, and to have stayed. They are, said the Sultan, somewhat opposed to the Sultan and the Manṣūrīs. The assertion that some at least of these tribes are not so native to the country as the Āl Manṣūr is probably correct, and certainly al-Hamdānī's **Ṣifah** seems to indicate a considerable movement in population in this part of the Yemen, even as between his day and the Jāhiliyyah. Apart from the Bijayrīs, the Bū Ṭuhayf are reported by Landberg to have come from Ḥarīb.

The ancestor of the Manṣūrī tribe is said to have been the **ra'īs** of the ᶜAwdhalī tribe. Another informant told me that the Āl Ḥaydarah b. Manṣūr in Abyan are descended also from the same Manṣūr. A Manṣūrī maintained that Manṣūrīs do not intermarry with other tribes, but only among themselves and with the Sultanic house. Formerly they paid no tithes and a Manṣūrī was never put in prison (**mā yaḥtabis**). A Sultan, on the contrary, denied that Sultans intermarried with Manṣūrīs, averring that they only marry each-other. I understand his statement to refer to Dawlah girls only, for I cannot think that the Dawlah would not take girls from the tribes if they wished.

Al-Bijayrī : I assume al-Jifrī means Bijayr al-Raydah.

Al-Ghānimī : This name was explained to me as equivalent to am-Shaᶜawī, for al-Ghānimī is, as stated, the **bayt amma**ᶜ**qalah,** headman's family, and their ancestor is al-Ghānimī.

Al-Damānī : Cf. **supra.**

Al-Muḥammadī : This name is identical with the Āl ᶜAlī Muḥammad who have as their ᶜ**āqils** the family of al-Dahbalī known to al-Hamdānī. The Āl ᶜAlī Muḥammad are settled in Shurjān at am-Darb, Shawḥaṭ, al-Ruqub, and ᶜArābah etcetera. This group is known as Miḥimmadī, and includes among its sub-tribes am-Marzūqī, am-Juᶜaymalānī and Āl-Manṣūr bir (= bin) Aḥmad.

To the above an informant in 1954 added am-Yazīdī, a tribe given in the **Handbook of the Western Aden Protectorate** as part of the Ahl Wuḥaysh settled in the Martaᶜah region of al-Ẓāhir: they and the Bijayr al-Raydah do not seem to be large tribes.

In this connection it may be mentioned that the Ahl Dayyān and al-Nakhaᶜī of Ḍalaᶜah were described to me as the **ḥabīṭs** of the ᶜAwādhil, and in fact Dathīnah was also a **ḥabīṭ** to them. The term **mutaḥābiṭīn** is synonymous with **mutakhāwīn**, brothers of each-other, it is said. **Ḥabīṭ** is further stated to mean 'neighbour' in ᶜAwdhalī tribal law, equivalent to the classical Arabic **jār**, this last statement confirming Landberg's rendering of the word as **contigu, voisin**. This term however requires further enquiry for it obviously implies a fixed known relationship implying certain obligations. It is nevertheless clear that to be the **ḥabīṭ** of another implies no form of subjection and Dathīnah so far from being subject to the ᶜAwdhalīs, or vice-versa, was until fairly recent times to some degree tributary to the ᶜAwlaqīs.

Arbitration, the Sultan and the Dahbalīs

The Ahl ᶜAwdhillah are in al-Ẓāhir and al-Kawr, but al-Ẓāhir is divided into Arḍ ᶜAwdhillah and Arḍ al-Manṣūrī — which latter is Arḍ al-Sulṭān, the Sultan's territory. The Arḍ al-Ẓāhir has many headmen (ᶜ**uqqāl**), but the Dahbalī is the source of reference for tribal custom (**marjaᶜ al-ᶜawā'id al-qabīliyyah**) or, as Sultan Ṣāliḥ also expressed it, **'Al-Dahbalī maradd fī manṭiqat al-Ẓāhir, Arḍ ᶜAw-**

dhillah, The Dahbalī is the source to which reference is made in al-Ẓāhir district'.

Maradd, with its synonum **marjaᶜ** is an ancient term which I have discussed in my study of the so-called 'Constitution of Medina', in document F of which any incident or quarrel (**ḥadath wa-'shtijār**) the ill consequences of which are feared is to be referred back to Allāh... and to Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh (**maraddu-hu ilā Allāh...**). Colonel H.F. Jacob alludes to the 'titular "Marad(d)" or Chief' of the Ahl Quṭayb, but I imagine that their Maradd would be really a repository of law and custom, a kind of arbiter, rather than a chief. I have also come across the term in the former Wāḥidī sultanate.

It rather looks as if, from the purely legal point of view, the Dahbalī Ashrāf even in al-Hamdānī's time would have held a position not unlike that of the Prophet in Medina, in the sense that they were the sources of opinion on customary law. I do not know whether the Dahbalī Ashrāf go back to the pre-Islamic era. It would be interesting to find if they are mentioned in any of the inscriptions, but they are not mentioned by Ibn al-Kalbī in **Jamharat al-nasab** though he does give a genealogy of Awd.

Tribes used to go to the Dahbalī of their own free will so that he could settle their differences. He also had the **khuṭūṭ al-Dahbalī,** the Dahbalī documents which are said to have contained the record of his customary rights, but these were apparently carried off by Imām Yaḥyā's Zaydī troops. The said documents contained a record of such customary rights as the fee of a **thawb** — in practice two riyāls — which had to be paid to the Dahbalī in the case of a woman marrying outside her tribe. I think their **khuṭūṭ** may well have been somewhat similar in certain respects to the ᶜAwdhalī **sharᶜ** a translation of which I published many years ago. The chief family of the Dahbalīs seems to be the Ahl Sufyān. Muḥammad al-Akwaᶜ says that the present day Dahbalīs live in Wādī Shurjān of al-Ẓāhir.

The ᶜAwdhalī Sultan at Zārah appears to have had no sovereignty over the large Damānī tribe who seem in fact to have

been linked to him by only the most tenuous of threads. The Damānī **ᶜāqil** is appointed by a ceremony similar to that of the ᶜAwdhalī Sultan. When one **ᶜāqil** dies they crown his son with the turban (**ᶜammamū walad al-ᶜāqil**). Three of the **ᶜashshārīn,** collectors of the tithe (**ᶜashīr**) belonging to the **ᶜāqil's** tribe come and each links a loop of the fuse of the Arab gun (**dhabīlat al-bunduq al-ᶜArabī**) round his head, three loops (**thalāth layyāt**), one after the other. In return for this he gives them a present. This custom will at once be recognised as pre-Islamic for ᶜAbdullāh b. Ubayy, the arch-**Munāfiq** was about to be crowned this way in Yathrib when the Prophet arrived and his ambitions were disappointed. Till about the 1950s the Damānīs seem to have been little known and to a great extent isolated in their mountains.

The Shaᶜawīs, Sultan Ṣāliḥ told me, are greater than either the Dahbalīs or Damānīs, and in order of precedence the Shaᶜawīs would be followed by the Dahbalīs and then by the Damānīs. The important point is that the Sultan of Zārah is the **maradd** or arbiter in any quarrel (**khilāf**) between these three large tribal groups, but in war the Manṣūrīs and the Sultan fight side by side as a single group, whereas the other tribes may fight separately and conclude separate peaces.

The Drum: sign of authority

'Le tambour', says Landberg 'est et l'a toujours été, la prérogative du pouvoir dans le Sud. Chaque petit Sultan a son **ṭabl** ou **marfaᶜ** qui a même un nom particulier. Il y a également des **ᶜāqil** qui, de souche ancienne, ont leur **ṭabl** qu'ils frappent lorsqu'ils veulent convoquer leur guerriers'. In Rasūlid histories there are constant allusions to the **ṭabl-khānah** and we have in fact discussed this in our forthcoming volume on Ṣanᶜāʾ; Governors seem to have been sent kettledrums and a banner by the Rasūlid Sultan, though this may be a custom derived from Syria and Egypt. The **Rawḥ al-rūḥ** alludes to drums being beaten in a house to summon tribal help, and I recall that for similar reasons when in Shahārah in 1964 I heard drums beaten there.

There are significant parallels to this on the western bank of the Red Sea. In the 'Empire of Zayla^{c}' the right to have drums beaten belonged to the king in the early Middle Ages. Its usage in Ethiopia is well established and I may refer to al-Ḥaymī's journey to the Emperor there. According to J. **Baeteman** provincial governors are preceded on their progress through the country by a drum carried on mules. The great royal drum which was beaten at ceremonials, e.g., the entry of Ṣarsa Dengel into Aksum in 1580 A.D. had the name Deb Anbasā, Hyena and Lion — it was a large **nagārit** (Ar. **naqqārah**) reserved for the king. When Menelik conquered Gurage in 1875 he divided it into five 'drum-districts' called **nagārit.** For the curfew the Zaydī Imām's troops used to beat the drum in the evening, and when in Bayḥān at Sūq ^{c}Abdullāh I remember the drum was beaten every night at 10 p.m. for the curfew, there known by the Turkish term, **yasaq.**

I must mention here the famous copper drum of Yāfi^{c} which is said to have **ṭalāsim siḥriyyah,** magic talismans on it — I have not seen it but it might be ancient, even pre-Islamic.

The drums of the ^{c}Awdhalī Sultan of Zārah have no names it seems. What is significant however is that he is not the only possessor of a drum in the ^{c}Awdhalī confederation. Landberg refers to the drum (**marfa^{c}**) of 'the independant territory of Damān which is a sign of ancient power. Myself I have heard that the Damānī chief has a drum and a thread (**lah marfa^{c} wa-khayṭ**). The thread is a sign of authority and is drawn from the Sultan's **mi^{c}waz** or kilt and sent out as a sign of his command to a tribesman to come to Zārah. The Manṣab of the saint ^{c}Umar b. Sa^{c}īd at am-Nigdah of Wādī ^{c}Aydarī also has a thread which he sends to a tribesman wishing to perform the **ziyārah** as a sign of the protection of the saint from whose **bayraq** it is drawn. Again this is a custom that goes right back to the Jāhiliyyah for al-Marzūqī alludes to a loop of hair or wool which a pilgrim would wear going on the **ḥajj**, for the same reason.

The drums of the Damānī ^{c}**āqil** are called al-Naṣṣar and al-Muṣabbiḥ — the latter is so named because it 'attacks the foes early

in the morning (**yuṣabbiḥal-khuṣūm ghabash**)'. The drummers (**shuḥḥādh**) beat on these two drums and as the drums are beaten thus will the bullets fly. Landberg also states that the ᶜ**āqil** of the independant territory of al-Shaᶜah to the south of the Kawr and of Zughayrah, al-ᶜUmayrī has his **ṭabl** or **marfa**ᶜ called al-Ghassān. On the other hand I was informed that the Dahbalī, despite the fact that his family is so ancient, has no drum.

This and other evidence reinforce the conclusion that the Zārah Sultans had little if any suzerainty over either the Shaᶜawī or the Damānī. Yet when the ᶜAwdhalī Sultan has his drums beaten and announces that he has been attacked by any tribe, then all — Shaᶜawī, Damānī and Dahbalī come to his aid.

The tribes which respond to the Sultan's drum are called Ahl al-Marfaᶜ and the list of these given me in 1941 was al-Qafaᶜī, al-Ṭuhayfī, al-Bijayrī, and al-Manṣūrī, i.e., the Kawr tribes, but in 1954 the tribes Barkānī, Shihrī, Mukayrasī, Dhirwī and Muḥammadī were added to my list — all these latter are tribes of al-Ẓāhir, and this looks perfectly correct. Sultan Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥusayn expressly stated that al-Miḥimmidī, al-Shaᶜawī and al-Damānī are not Ahl al-Marfaᶜ.

The saint ᶜUmar b. Saᶜīd and his authority

At the same time and, presumably, side by side with the secular authority of the Sultan and ᶜUqqāl, there was what one might call a spiritual power or authority which extended beyond the territory of the ᶜAwdhalī confederation. The Āl ᶜUmar b. Saᶜīd are Manāṣib, Lords of the sacred enclave in which the domed tomb of ᶜUmar b. Saᶜīd lies. One of the **Khādims** of his shrine (**khādim** here being an honourable term and his office highly respected) told me that before the entry of the British into the country (he meant before the 1940s or so) the Āl ᶜUmar b. Saᶜīd were the judges of the country (**ḥukkām al-bilād**), sending out 'the thread' as a sign to cease warring. He added that the ᶜAwdhalī Sultan's power was restricted to Lawdar and its immediate district, al-Ḥaḍn, and al-Ẓāhir up to ᶜAryab.

IV

The **Khādim** of the shrine brings the banner of the Saint and intervenes between the tribes (**yigīb al-bayraq ḥaqq al-Waliyy wa-yifra^{c} bayn al-qabā'il**) after the outbreak of war. This incidentally is also common procedure in Ḥaḍramawt, associated with Manṣabs of **ḥawṭahs**— The warring tribes in the field at once separate because they reverence the **bayraq** (**yistaḥramūn-ah**) and out of respect for the Saint (**istiḥrām li-'l-Waliyy**). When the **bayraq** goes out to a **qabīlī** and he is armed (**mustalib**) he must fire a salute (**ta^{c}shīrah**). When the **bayraq** goes to a house it is absolutely **de rigueur** that a head (a sheep) be slaughtered for it, or perhaps more accurately for the Saint it represents.

The Mashāyikh of ^{c}Umar Sa^{c}īd used to judge cases by tribal law. The **sharī^{c}ah,** I think, was hardly known. I have attended both **^{c}urfī** and **sharī^{c}ah** courts in Zārah and Mūdiyah in 1954 and while the **^{c}urfī** court was always thronged with vociferous litigants the **sharī^{c}ah** court was often quite empty. When the **khuddām** of ^{c}Umar b. Sa^{c}īd intervened between two contending parties no fee was payable to the Saint. He had in any case certain fees as well as his **ziyārāt** or pilgrimages at which sheep and cattle (**^{c}anam wa-qurūsh**) were brought to him.

The territories from which the Saint drew revenue are indicative of his influence, or rather that of the Lords of his shrine. They were am-Sha^{c}ah ḥaqq am-Sha^{c}awī lā mājil al-Ḥaḍn, Mūdiyah, ^{c}Ulah, am-Raydah ḥaqq al-Bijayr, Arḍ al-^{c}Awdhalī min ^{c}Urr (al-Bayḍā) lā Marwaḥah, Shurjān bilād al-Dahbalī, Arḍ am-Dhiyabī, etcetera. The Ahl Damān are also one of the tribes of ^{c}Umar b. Sa^{c}īd and even now (1954) the Saint receives the **^{c}ushr** or tithe of sheep (**ghanam**) and grain (**ḥabb**) from Damān. The Saint used to have the **^{c}ushūr** from the Ḥasanah. Mayāsir and Sa^{c}īdī of Dathīnah, but the British Government took these away from the Saint. This, I was told was to provide revenue for the local administration.

This country then was the property (**milk**) of ^{c}Umar Sa^{c}īd, over which he had judgement (**kalām**) and from which he received tithes. On every field (**jirbah**) a furrow (**tilm**) went to the Saint, and one in

every hundred head of sheep and goats. According to another informant, ᶜUmar Saᶜīd had, on the country of the Sultans, merchants and soldiers (**bilād al-Dawlah wa-ʾl-tijār wa-ʾl-ᶜaskar**), one third of the tithe (**lah thilith**), and in each field he received a long furrow by the bund (**wa-lah fī ʾl-widin tilmṭūl**). He had half of the tithe (**nāṣifah am-ᶜashīr**) of the tribes of al-Ḥaḍn, al-Ẓāhir and the Kawr. On tribal land (**bilād al-qabāʾil**) he had one of the furrows in the field of those that run across the breadth (**sāliq fī ʾm-widin min gayz al-sawāliq**) and half of the tithe (**nāṣifat am-ᶜashīr**). A correspondent wrote to me in 1957 that 'in the past the **khuddām** of ᶜUmar b. Saᶜīd collected a third of the tithes of grain from the whole area of al-Kawr and used it for their own'. Half of the ᶜ**ashīr** used to go to ᶜUmar Saᶜīd, but half was called ᶜ**ashīr Miryam** — my informant identified this Miryam with Miryam bint ᶜImrān, Mary mother of Jesus. This term ᶜ**ashīr Miryam** is used all over the area because she guaranteed the cultivator from the sun so that it would not harm him (**ḍammanat al-batūl min al-shams lā tashūf-uh** (= **lā taḍurr-uh**). When the grain arrived at the threshing floor (**waṣar**), simply a smooth circle of hard clay ground with a ring of small stones to define its limits, the portion of the poor would be measured out and they would come there to receive it.

In 1947 my Ḥaḍnī informants expressed the same thing in slightly different form. All the tribes of al-Ḥaḍn, they said, are raᶜiyyat ᶜUmar b. Saᶜīd, his subjects. They pay tithes to him, a portion of which goes to the Waliyy, i.e., the Manṣab, and a portion to the poor (**naṣīf li-ʾl-Waliyy wanaṣīf li-ʾllāh**). The **khuddām** of the Saint would come out to collect the ᵒ**ashīr** — now all this ᶜ**ashīr Miryam** and ᶜUmar Saᶜīd's portion is in the hands of the ᶜAwdhalī Sultan.

All the afore-going recalls statements made by Ibn Hishām as also by Ibn al-Kalbī. They speak of ᶜUmyānis (ᶜAmmanas) a pre-Islamic god of Khawlān. Between this god and Allāh they used to divide a portion of their cattle (**anᶜām**) and crops (**ḥurūth**). The Arabic for 'portion' is **ḥaqq — ḥaqq** ᶜ**Amm Anis** and **ḥaqq Allāh.** The passage is not easy to interpret. Mary's tithe reminds one that Christ-

ianity was at one time widespread in the south, and of the passage in the Qur'ān, sūrah iii,37 (Āl ᶜImrān), 'Whenever he came into Mary in the **miḥrāb** he found provision with her. He said, "Whence do you have this"? She said, "It is from God, God makes provision for whomever he willeth without reckoning" '.

The daughter of ᶜUmar b. Saᶜīd, Saᶜīdah bint ᶜUmar, whose tomb (which I have visited) lies near the coast between Shuqrah and Aḥwar receives what Landberg designates as the **votive** furrow, and the Miṣbaḥī shrine at Midmanah receives the first furrow and one tenth of the corn after the harvest. Of this, half (**ḥaqq Allāh**) is distributed to the poor by the sanctuary, and half is the property of the Mashāyikh.

The origins of the ᶜAwdhalī Sultanic family

The origins of the Sultanic house at Zārah are not really known, but it is believed the family is of ancient and honourable descent. Sultan Ṣāliḥ quoted to me the following verses which ascribe Quraysh descent to his ancestors, but similar claims are made by other noble families in southern Arabia that do not seem to have much evidence to support them. Whether this particular claim is genuine or not it has at least the merit of being some four or five centuries old.

جِـدِّي قُـرَيْشي مـن الْـقِـبْـلَة تَهَـبْـهَـبْ وَهَـبْ
لا مـا سَـكَـن طَـفَّـة آلْـكَـوْر المَـنـيـع الـعَـجَـبْ
ذِي رَتَّـب آمـذِيـب مَـمْـرَط وآمْنِمِـر وآمْخَنَـبْ

Of Quraysh was my forebear from the Qiblah took he urgent way,
Till at the Kawr's mountain crest, wondrous steep, he came at last to stay.
He't was who, over lean-flanked wolf, leopard and ibex cow held sway.

For their rallying cry the ᶜAwdhalīs and their Sultan, the ᶜAwlaqīs (but the Maᶜnīs say **Anā dhīb Maᶜn**) and the Ahl am-Saᶜīdī use the call **'Anā dhīb al-Kawr,** I am the wolf of the Kawr'. It is not without significance that the leopard is the epithet of the warrior, and in other districts, but not here, the ibex is associated with the ritual hunt. One says, **'Fulān nimr,** So and so is a leopard'. If you say, **'Fulān dhīb**, So and so is a wolf', it means he is skilful and cunning (**ḥādhiq wa-shāṭir**).

Another origin is suggested by a certain Shaykh Aḥmad Bā Riḍwān a Ms. copy of whose work I saw for the first time in Bayḥān entitled **al-Qawl al-ḥasan fī maᶜrifat baᶜḍ sukkān Ḥaḍramawt wa-'l-Yaman** in 1954. I cannot say on what authority Bā Riḍwān speaks, but he does draw on such known mediaeval sources as Muḥammad b. Saᶜd Bā Shukayl and Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ashᶜarī.

'This is the **nisbah** of the sons of ᶜIff b. Yazan al-Ṣayᶜarī al-Kindī — among his sons is numbered ᶜAzzān b. ᶜIff, and the posterity of Āl ᶜAzzān settled in al-Sarw and Qintār b. ᶜIff and the posterity of Āl Hashshām and some of the inhabitants of al-Ṭaffah (the crest of the Kawr) and Manṣūr b. ᶜIff. The posterity of the latter are three, Aḥmad am-Manṣūr, ancestor of Āl Aḥmad am-ᶜAwsajī and his male relations (ᶜ**aṣabah**) and Ḥasan (text Ḥisan) am-Manṣūr (89) and the posterity of Āl Ḥasan the inhabitants of the Kawr — i.e., the Ghudr and ᶜĀmir, and Aḥmad b. Hamīm from whom is descended (**fī-hi**) Shams bint Aḥmad — she being the wife of Manṣūr am-Farīd al-ᶜUrayfī (or ᶜArīfī), mother of Jamīl and his brothers, and from him (Aḥmad?) is descended her sister, wife of Ḥusayn b. Yaḥyā, (and the third is the wife of am-ᶜAwsajī'.

Landberg considers al-ᶜAwsajī to be the family name of the ᶜAwdhalī Sultans and he points to a family of ᶜAwāsij in what is nowadays ᶜAsīr mentioned by al-Hamdānī who were Ashrāf Ḥimyar, but there may be no connection between these ᶜAwāsij and the ᶜAwdhalīs.

The name al-ᶜAwsajī seems to be limited nowadays, to a branch

of the house from which Sultan Ṣāliḥ is descended also, but which has seemingly lost all power, settled at Sākin am-Ṣawmaᶜah in the district called am-Ṣurr. In company with the political officer I paid a brief call on Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad ibn im-ᶜAwsagī there in 1964 — it is not far from Zārah. The ᶜAwsagī/ᶜAwsajī still has some judicial function. I should like to have spent some time there to consult him on the ᶜAwdhalīs but the political officer was pressed for time and even a **rās ghanam** slaughtered in the courtyard for our entertainment could not detain him longer. So often circumstances such as this lose one the opportunity for enquiry into the ancient and still surviving culture of southern Arabia.

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N.B. Since this paper is extracted from a much larger study fully foot-noted with references to sources but as yet unpublished, only a summary bibliography directly related to the text is cited here.

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Addendum

P.101/13 In the 4th century A.D. the Arabian monarch Imru' al-Qays was evidently crowned in this way as he was *dhū aṣr al-tāj*. See Irfan Shahid, "Philological observations on the Namâra inscription", *Jl. Semitic Studies*, Manchester, XXIV, 34 in *Byzantium and the Semitic Orient before the rise of Islam*, London, 1988. A like form of crowning was also the practice in Swat till quite recently. See F. Barth, *The last Wali of Swat*, Oslo, 1985, 40. The tribal elders "tied the turban around my head. It was a very simple affair: the head qazi tied the first loop of the turban, and next the Darmei Khan did it." Then every Khan followed.